## DRAW A CIRCLE AROUND THIS DATE — JULY 20

**Summer Meeting Announcement**

Nearly two hundred of our members and friends assembled for the summer meeting last July, and the general verdict was in favor of another such meeting. We can promise that it will be alive and interesting. While Friday, July 20th, will be the official day, we are planning a special occasion at the Atwater Kent Tavern on Thursday the 19th. A complete announcement will be sent at an early date to all members. If you live in Vermont or are planning to visit the state in the summer, we trust you will mark the date on your calendar of days worth while.

Those who wish to make hotel reservations should write the Pavilion or the Tavern, Montpelier, Vermont. We will be of all assistance possible, and queries will be answered promptly.

## OUR STORY OF THE MONTH

**A Tale Out of Early Circus Days**

Just when the first circus appeared in Vermont seems misty as far as records are concerned, but this anecdote, which has many variations, dates back into the early days when small circuses toured the state.

One such circus, after playing in Brandon, crossed the mountains through Brandon Notch. On the way, the sole animal in the menageries, a chimpanzee, died. He was tossed into the bushes beside the road. A day later, two farmers spotted him. After looking him over, one remarked: "He don't look like anybody down my way." The other agreed that he didn't resemble any of his neighbors; then he added, "Let's go down to Middlebury and see if any of the faculty's missin'."

*(Our Director is a graduate of Middlebury).*

VERMONT HISTORICAL SOCIETY, MONTPELIER, VERMONT.
Leon S. Gay, President; Dr. Arthur W. Peach, Director and Editor,
Mrs. Louise E. Koier, Associate Editor.

VHS *News and Notes*
VERMONT HISTORICAL SOCIETY
Montpelier, Vermont

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Rochester, Vermont

THE VERMONT HISTORICAL SOCIETY, MONTPELIER, VERMONT

# *News & Notes*

A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER FOR ALL MEMBERS OF THE SOCIETY

Volume 2 July 1951 Number 11

**1. At the Head Table (left to right): Mr. Arms, Mrs. Arms, David C. Arms, Director Peach, Mrs. Johnson, Prof. Johnson, Gov. Emerson, President Gay, Mr. Dunn.**

## HISTORY AT THE GRASS-ROOT LEVEL

**Emphasized in Talks by Johnson and Dunn at Summer Meeting Dinner.** L. E. K.

A delighted audience alternately chuckled and listened intently as Prof. Burges Johnson of Stamford, Vt., spoke on "Vermont Folklore at the Grass-root Level" at the summer meeting dinner, July 19. Professor Johnson, who is the author of several books, a former professor of English at Vassar College and Syracuse University, a lecturer and a former Editor-in-chief of *Judge,* has his roots in Vermont and his appreciation of Vermont humor is deep and provocative. His talk, sparkling with anecdotes culled from his own family collection, stressed the contributions to folklore constantly being made by incidents based on fact, which are embellished and enriched as they pass from one generation to another. This type of thing, he said, is always fluid; it never "jells;" if it did, it would not be folklore. He also stressed the speed with which such lore travels from one region and one state to another, a fact which many in the audience later corroborated.

Speaking on "The Library and the Historical Society," John Taylor Dunn, Librarian of the New York State Historical Association, Cooperstown, N. Y., also brought history into the realm of our everyday life. Starting with the thesis that "junk is history," he showed by actual experiences in New York, how extremely valuable the dust-covered contents of our attics may prove to be. Letters, old account books, diaries, newspaper clippings, even seemingly prosaic discarded household utensils, he said, all throw light on the manners and thought of their period.

**2. At the Head Table (left to right): Mrs. Dunn, Mr. FitzPatrick, Mrs. Kent, Mrs. Pierce, Mrs. Gustee, Mr. Doten, Mrs. Doten.**

"Don't throw anything away," he urged, "until you have taken it to your local historical museum or society. It may well be a priceless reminder of the past."

Dr. Peach introduced the final speaker on the program, David C. Arms, a junior at Burlington High School and winner of the Edmunds Memorial Prize Essay Contest for 1951. Mr. Arms has two brothers who have graduated from college and a third who is a veteran of World War II now living in Vermont; all four boys have been brought up to believe in Vermont and its future. His essay, "The History of Our Farm," traced its story from the time of the Indians down to the present day and was delivered in an easy, straightforward manner that was pleasant to hear. A highlight of the essay and also a fine example of Vermont fortitude was his tale of the heroic struggle his father made to save his Jersey cattle in the flood of 1927.

During the course of the evening Spencer Wright, baritone, of Montpelier, sang "Dedication" by Franz and "My Journey's End" by Fay Foster. Miss Nathalie Wiquest of Williamstown, soprano, sang "I Love Thee" by Grieg and "If I Could Tell You" by Idabelle Fireston. Their teacher, Frank Chatterton of the staff of Vermont Junior College Summer School of Music, was their accompanist.

Governor Emerson, although bound by another date for the evening, kindly "dropped in" to bring the state's and his personal greeting. He spoke briefly and to the point on the significance of Vermont history to the state. President Gay acted as toastmaster, and the invocation was given by the Rev. G. R. FitzPatrick of the Unitarian Church. The Rev. G. R. FitzPatrick also loaned his tape recorder for a transcript of the entire program.

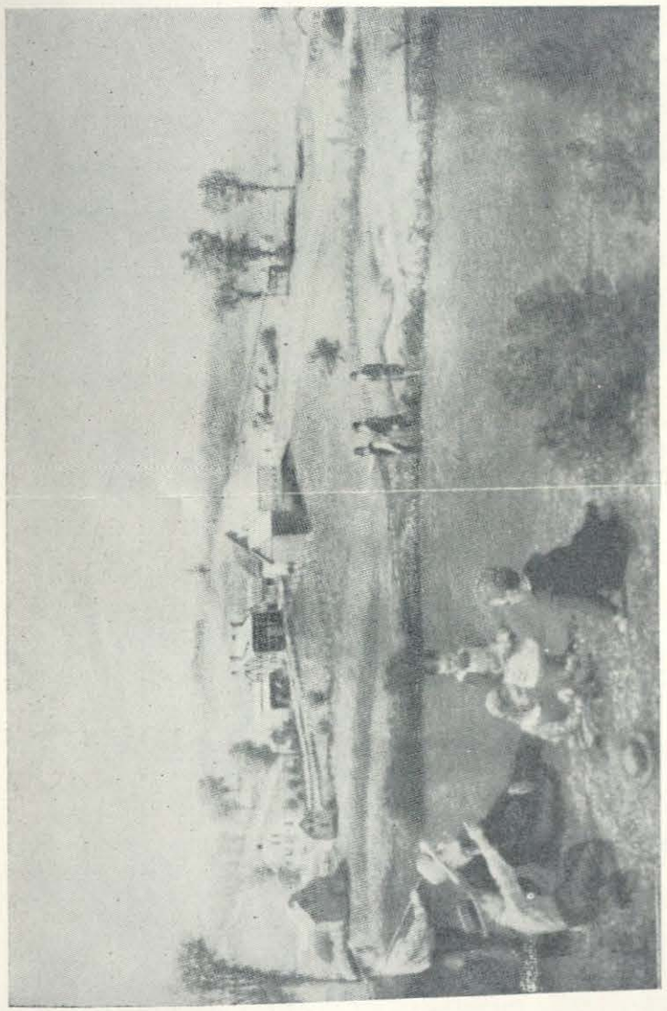
We hope to print later both Professor Johnson's address and that by Mr. Dunn in the *Quarterly* so that those who missed the dinner may have an opportunity to share our enjoyment of a very noteworthy evening.

## PLEASANT HOURS AT THE KENT TAVERN

**Gilman Pictures Exhibited** A. W. P.

The old Kent Tavern at Kents' Corner, Calais, came gaily to life on July 19th, the first day of the two-day summer session of the Society. Nearly three hundred good folks and true, largely our members, some of them coming from far corners of the state, appeared, looked over the tav-





*From a charcoal drawing by J. F. Gilman*

*Kents' Corner*

ern, viewed the impressive Gilman pictures on exhibition in the old dance-hall, enjoyed a real country hot-dish supper, remained for the exhibition of country dancing by a special group, then danced themselves if so inclined.

The opening of the tavern was not, as newspapers stated, "the first public opening." That will come when all renovations are completed, and the complete plan for the use of the tavern is ready. The tavern was presented to the Society in 1944, by Atwater Kent, but funds are not yet available for its development, and will not be until the final settlement of the Kent estate. In the meantime, progress is being made, however, through the interest and co-operation of Mrs. Ira Rich Kent (VHS), chairman of the Society's Kent Tavern Committee. She has placed in the rooms of the old tavern furnishings that echo the old days.

The work of James Franklin Gilman, an artist of whom little is known, who used local scenes for his inspiration, was represented by nearly forty items, done in oil, crayon, charcoal, and watercolor. A few etchings were shown. His landscapes and farm pictures were moving and appealing in their fidelity to their subjects and in their overtones.

The exhibit was made possible only through the interest of the owners of the pictures who willingly and generously loaned valuable pictures. We are grateful to these: Jason Bailey, Mrs. Fred Fearing, Miss Emma Foster, Miss Helen Harlow, Heaton Hospital, Wm. E. Lee, Bingham Marvin, Mrs. W. R. Harkness, Mrs. Mildred Templeton—all of Montpelier; Carroll Coburn, S. F. Morse, George Sibley, East Montpelier; Don Camp, South Barre; Ned Carter, Barre; Mrs. Ira Rich Kent, Calais; George Fitch Calais; Barre Christian Science Reading Room; Dr. A. Warren Stearns of Billerica, Mass., a Gilman enthusiast, brought twelve pictures from his Billerica home.

It is quite possible that Gilman pictures linger in hidden places; and it is also evident that the pictures are to increase in value. We hope in the end to know all the details of the artist's life.

We printed a small brochure whose cover carried the drawing you see in the accompanying halftone — far inferior to the original. The brochure has also a most interesting sketch, written by Mrs. Kent and her daughter, Elizabeth Kent Gay, touching on the artist and his work. We had a few extra copies printed, and readers may have a copy if they wish. First come, first served, however.

The weaving room was the scene of a long afternoon of activity and a constant audience. Mrs. Gertrude Wheelock of Calais demonstrated the spinning of wool and flax on large and small spinning wheels.

We are glad to report that the Maple Valley Community Center, Calais, furnished the supper and cleared $150, enough to settle all outstanding bills and debts and leave a goodly sum for redecorating their hall at Maple Corners. It is the basic policy of the Society to join hands with a local community as in this enjoyable day at the Tavern; and we are grateful for their interest and support.

The exhibition of country dancing in the candle-lit ballroom was given by Mr. and Mrs. Robert Field, Mr. and Mrs. Ray Smith, Mr. and Mrs. Heman Rice, and Mr. and Mrs. H. Belmont Houghton of Montpelier Their dances, illustrative of various types of country dances, were followed with delight and applause by a pleased audience.

The October *Quarterly* will carry a detailed version of the day at the tavern in view of the historical significance of the occasion.

## AN INDIAN MAKES HISTORY

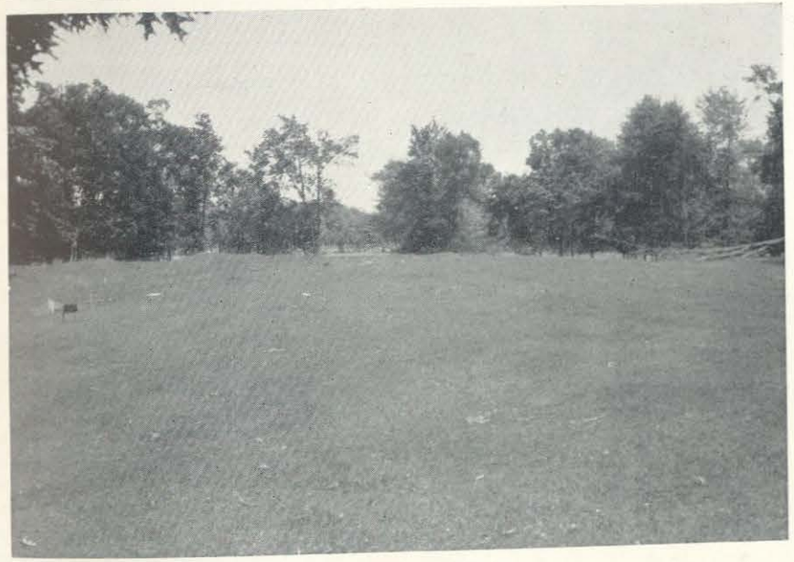
**An Amateur's Version** **A. W. P.**

The telephone call from Mr. Brooks, the archaeologist in charge of our investigation of Indian sites, told me that he had "something interesting to show me." A drive across the state brought me to the site which you see in the picture captioned "The Site." This site, which previous study had indicated would be fruitful, has been leased for two years.

At the site, I saw what you see in the picture captioned "What Is Here?" Seeing nothing, I raised the obvious query. With brush and trowel, Mr. Brooks went to work, and you see in the picture captioned, "The Story Begins," what I saw. He had covered the skull for the night, lest some wanderer visit the site. Promptly assisting in the work in my amateurish way with Mr. Brook's coaching, the remains of an Indian of long ago came to light, and you see him (or her) as he emerged from the earth and the darkness of no-one-knows-now how many years.

The skeleton was removed in parts, placed carefully in assorted bags, and is now being prepared by Mr. Brooks for shipment to a nationally known anthropologist who will give us a scientific report on the Indian and his probable his-





1. The Site

2. What Is Here?

3. The Story Begins

tory.

While this burial was the first Mr. Brooks had found, he had assembled in the brief time work had been done a range of artifacts which are promising and which mark the first scientific beginning of the study of our Indian history—that is, the first done under Vermont auspices according to scientific methods. What story lies beyond the quiet figure in the earth on the site might be far-reaching and of lasting value.

The final report of the finding of this burial and all evidences showing Indian occupancy of the site will appear in the *Quarterly* with illustrations and will be written by Mr. Brooks.

4. It Ends

This beginning of what is the first chapter in a long study of Vermont's primitive life was made possible through a fund made available by a leading Vermonter and a member of VHS long identified with constructive undertakings in the state which have become an integral part of the state's progress. Gifts from others who are interested in the archaeological plans of the Society will be given a hearty welcome—whether the gifts be large or small.

Visitors to the site must be limited, partly because the investigation must not be hampered, partly because the agreement with the owner protects him from the many who would invade the premises through curiosity rather than scientific interest. We hope to make it possible, at some future time, for our members to see such work as it goes on; also, we hope to prepare, again at some happy future date, a site in which the burials, the artifacts, and other evidences of ancient Indian life, are left where they are found—a sort of living museum. Visitors then may walk among them. Such a site would be sealed in the winter and open in the summer. Such a plan must await not only its discovery, but the funds to create it and maintain it. But we have faith the day will come.

## VERMONT EVENTS — SUMMER & AUTUMN DATES

**Events Worth a Visit**

We have debated the value to our members of a list of Vermont events and their dates, and have postponed a decision so long that the waning summer leaves a truncated schedule; but we have decided, mainly with the thought of aiding the many members who come to visit Vermont or who are summer residents, to offer a compilation which may be useful. This list comes to us through the kindness of Harris W. Soule (VHS), managing director of the Vermont Development Commission.

Aug. 13-15—Rutland—Annual Antique Show and Sale.

Aug. 13-18—Burlington—Vt. Open Tennis Tournament.

Aug. 15-16—Rochester—Craft & Hobby Show.

Aug. 15-29—Middlebury—Middlebury College Bread Loaf Writers' Conference.

Aug. 18—Rochester—Lord's Auction.

Aug. 19 — Springfield — Vt. State Champ. Small Bore Tournament.

Aug. 19-Sept. 1—Marlboro—Marlboro College Fiction Writers' Conference.

Aug. 20-30—Stowe—Trapp Family Music Camp.

Aug. 22—Barton—Sugar on Snow Party.

Aug. 22-25—Arlington—Craft Fair.

Aug. 23-25—Lyndonville — Caledonia County Fair.

Aug. 23-25—Hartland—Hartland Fair.

Aug. 25—West Dummerston—West River Town Festival.

Aug. 25-Sept. 3—Manchester—So. Vermont Artists' Annual Exhibition.

Aug. 27-28—Randolph—Two-day Trail Ride, Randolph Riding Club.

Aug. 27-Sept. 1—Essex Jct.—Champlain Valley Exposition.

Aug. 30-Sept. 1—So. Woodstock—Annual 50 and 100 mile trail rides.

Sept. 1-3—Windsor—National Morgan Horse Show.

Sept. 1-3—Fairlee—Square Dance Festival.

Sept. 1-3—Bradford—Connecticut Valley Exposition.

Sept. 3-8—Rutland—Rutland Fair.

Sept. 6, 7, 8—Barton—Orleans County Fair.

Sept. 12—Burlington—New England Zone Trap Shoot Championships.

Sept. 20-22—Tunbridge—World's Fair.

Sept. 22—Wilmington — Wilmington Farmers' Day.

Oct. 12-14—So. Woodstock — Foliage Rides, GMHA.

## SOMETHING FOR YOUR DINNER PARTY

**Or How To Reduce an Ego**

Miss Follette, our librarian, arranged county exhibits for our legislators to see if they wished to. The exhibit in each county included historical items from the towns — and some were shy, too, of material to represent their towns.

The list below is the one used to guide the arrangement. The dates indicate the year of the charter or incorporation. They

are valuable historical dates, but if any Vermonter knows all or even half of them, he is a remarkable person.

| | |
|---|---|
| Bennington County | 1779 |
| Windham County | 1781 |
| Orange County | 1781 |
| Rutland County | 1781 |
| Windsor County | 1781 |
| Addison County | 1785 |
| Chittenden County | 1787 |
| Caledonia County | 1796 |
| Franklin County | 1796 |
| Essex County | 1797 |
| Orleans County | 1797 |
| Grand Isle County | 1801 |
| Lamoille County | 1836 |

## OUR STORY OF THE MONTH

Most of the stories that drift into the present from earlier days deal with the eccentricities of men or their experiences. Now and then a woman appears on the scene, usually treated mildly, for Vermonters have never seemed to find amusement in the unfortunate experiences of others. This tale deals with the days when a "Squire" was an honored and exemplary figure in a community. Ella's husband was summoned before the Squire on the charge that she carried on her buttocks—as testified to by two female friends—black and blue welts which said husband had inflicted. The Squire was astonished and said to the husband: "You mean that you spanked her with the hard end of a broom!" "I did, Squire. The door was open on the porch. The broom was there. She was there, leaning over the woodbox, jawing me about the poor kindling. I'd been thinking of it for years. It's been gathering on me. She was there, so was the broom, so was I, so I took the chance." He straightened proudly. "I don't care what you do to me, Squire. I won't say I repent of it!"

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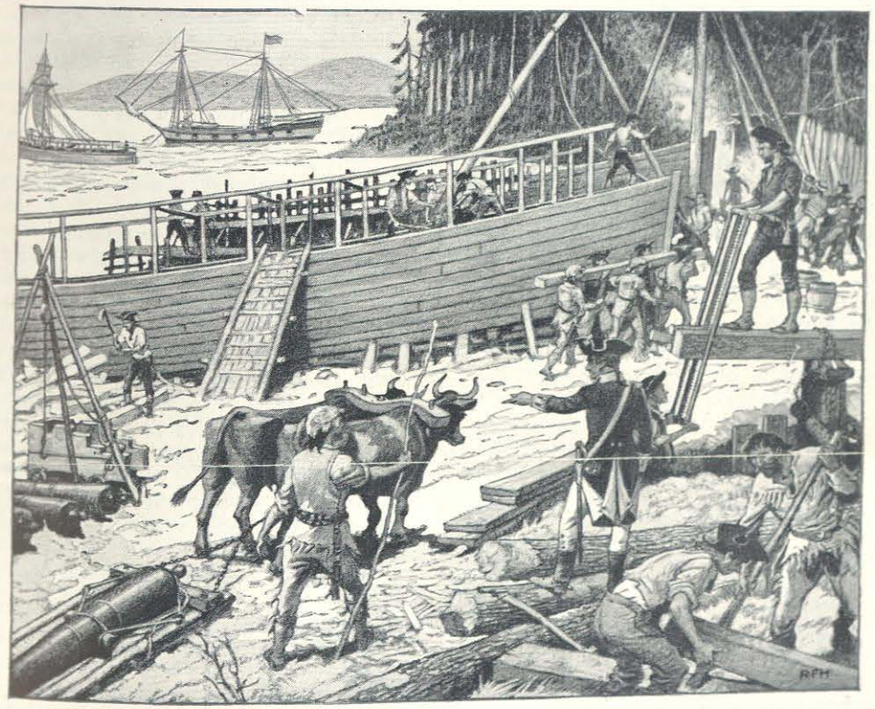

The Urgent Hours — Arnold Prepares for the Battle of Valcour Island

## THE PRESENT TENSE OF THE HISTORIC PAST

**Keynote of Champlain Historians at Sixth Conference, August 16.** L. K.

Despite intermittent showers outside, 110 Champlain Historians spent a memorable day at the Basin Harbor Club August 16, learning how the historic past can be translated for the layman into terms of immediate present-day experience. Under the able guidance of President Leon S. Gay in the morning and Judge Berne A. Pyrke in the afternoon, a stimulating panel of speakers discussed the available media for making history live, not just for the research man and the historically minded, but for those who might otherwise never dip into its fascinating pages.

After a few words of welcome from Lieut. Governor Joseph Johnson on behalf of the State of Vermont, William Foss, Assistant Director of the Division of Lands and Forests of the New York State Conservation Department, gave a very competent account of "The Conservation Resources of the Champlain Valley." Starting with the records of the earliest sawmill in Wolfsboro in 1767, he traced the economic history, first of the great pine forests of pioneer days and then of the red pine, Norway pine, oak, bass and ashwood stands. He also emphasized the